amar chitra katha
No. 48 Rs. 2.50
TARABAI
THE VALOROUS QUEEN OF RAJASTHAN

The history of Rajasthan is written in the heroic deeds of her men and women. Traditional ballads as well as modern text-books have made some of them well-known. Many however have remained little-known though they were no less valorous; TARABAI for instance.

A Chauhan by birth, she proved that a daughter could be as valiant as a son. She was instrumental in restoring her father's usurped estates to him. She fought by her husband as he rode forth to quell a treacherous attack on her father-in-law, Rana Raimal.

Her husband, Prithiviraj, was no less a personality. He was the younger brother of the famous Rana Sanga. Had his life not been treacherously shortened by his brother-in-law, he would have enjoyed today as important a place as is accorded to Rana Sanga in Rajput history.

The story, as narrated in this book, is based on Col. Tod's "Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan". There is divergence of opinion however, regarding the facts of the story.

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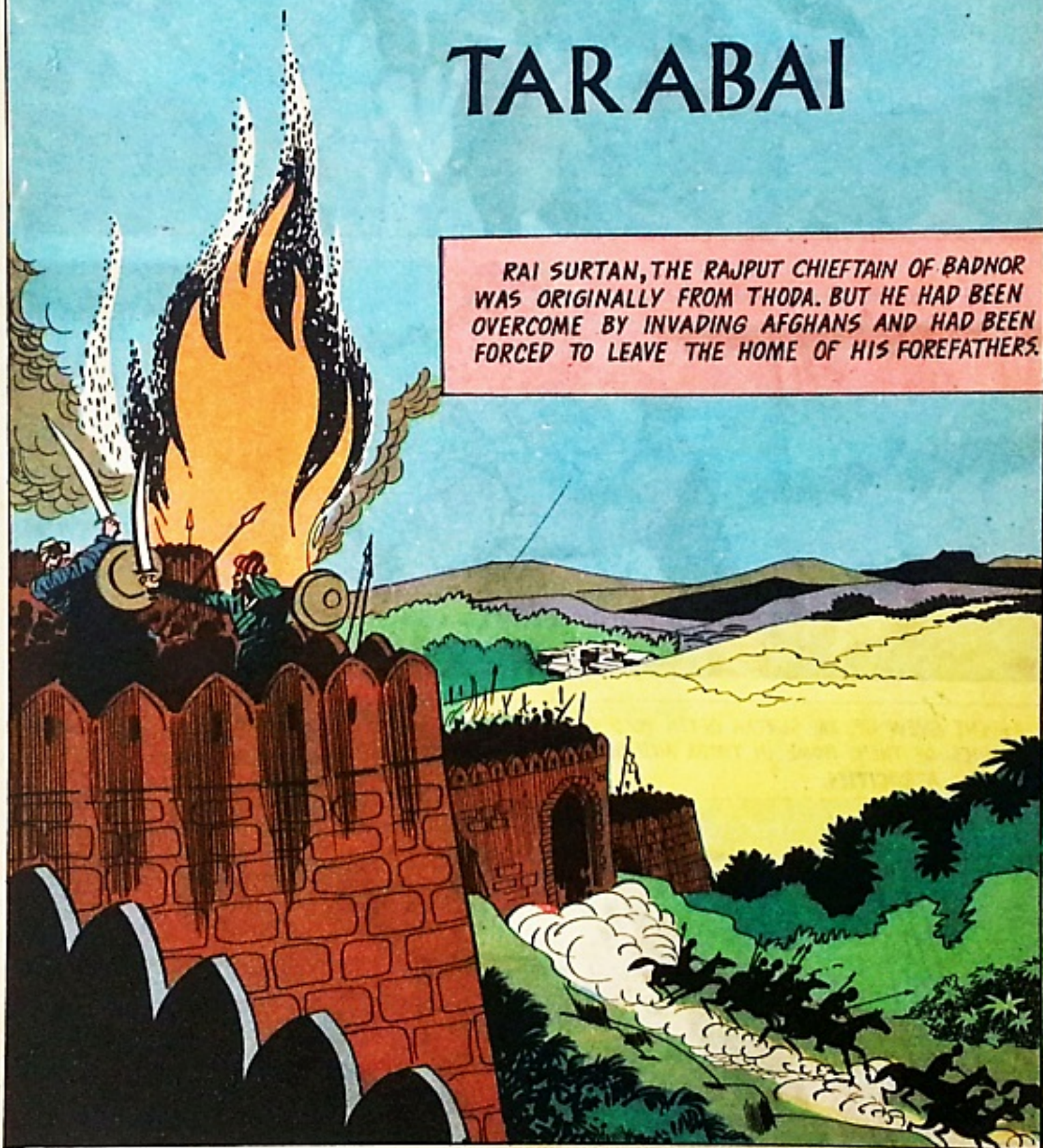
TARABAI
RAI SURTAN, THE RAJPUT CHIEFTAIN OF BADNOR WAS ORIGINALLY FROM THODA. BUT HE HAD BEEN OVERCOME BY INVADING AFGHANS AND HAD BEEN FORCED TO LEAVE THE HOME OF HIS FOREFATHERS.

HE HAD MOVED TO BADNOR, AT THE FOOT OF THE ARAVALLI RANGE, WITHIN THE BORDERS OF MEWAR.

IT WAS AT BADNOR THAT TARABAI WAS BORN.

AS SHE GREW UP, RAI SURTAN OFTEN TOLD HER STORIES OF THEIR HOME IN THODA AND OF THE AFGHAN ATROCITIES.
I HAVE TRIED SEVERAL TIMES TO WIN THODA BACK FROM THE AFGHANS BUT HAVE FAILED.

OH FATHER! HOW I WISH I WERE A BOY. I WOULD MOUNT A HORSE, BRANDISH MY SWORD, AND WIN BACK OUR LOST KINGDOM!

RAI SURTAN WAS PROUD OF HER SPIRIT.
YOU ARE AS GOOD AS ANY SON. I WILL TRAIN YOU IN ALL THE MANLY PURSUITS!

SOME DAY YOU WILL HELP ME WIN THODA BACK FROM THE INVADERS. I KNOW YOU WILL.

AND SO BEGAN TARABAI'S TRAINING.

EVEN WHILE RIDING AT FULL SPEED...

...SHE COULD SHOOT STRAIGHT AT HER TARGET.

THE MOST STALWART STALLIONS WERE LIKE LAMBS UNDER HER.

AND RAI SURTAN OBSERVED WITH PRIDE THE PROGRESS OF HER TRAINING.
TARA GROWS STRONGER AND MORE BEAU-TIFUL EACH DAY.

HER TRAINING IN HOUSEHOLD DUTIES WAS NOT NEGLECTED EITHER.

SOON TARABAI WAS EASILY THE MOST ACCOMPLISHED GIRL IN ALL MEWAR.
TARA IS NOW STRONG ENOUGH TO STAND THE TRIALS OF CAMPAIGN. I WILL MAKE ONE MORE ATTEMPT ON THODA.

HE CALLED TARABAI TO HIM.
TARA, PREPARE FOR BATTLE. WE SHALL MARCH INTO THODA.
I CAN HARDLY WAIT TO LEAVE, FATHER.

...BUT THEY WERE GREATLY OUTNUMBERED.

THIS ATTEMPT TOO WAS A FAILURE.

AS THE FATHER AND DAUGHTER RODE BACK TO BADNOR—

WHILE RAI SURTAN BUSIED HIMSELF IN RECRUITING MORE TROOPS, TARABAI TRAINED THE SOLDIERS.

AT BADNOR—

JAIMAL OF MEWAR? WHAT MAY YOU WANT OF US?

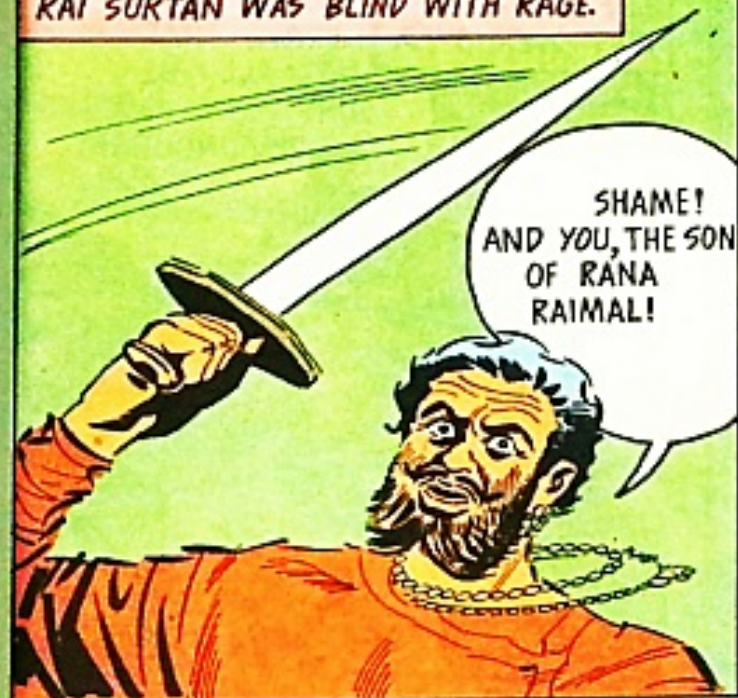
I HAVE COME TO WIN THE HAND OF THE FAIR TARABAI.

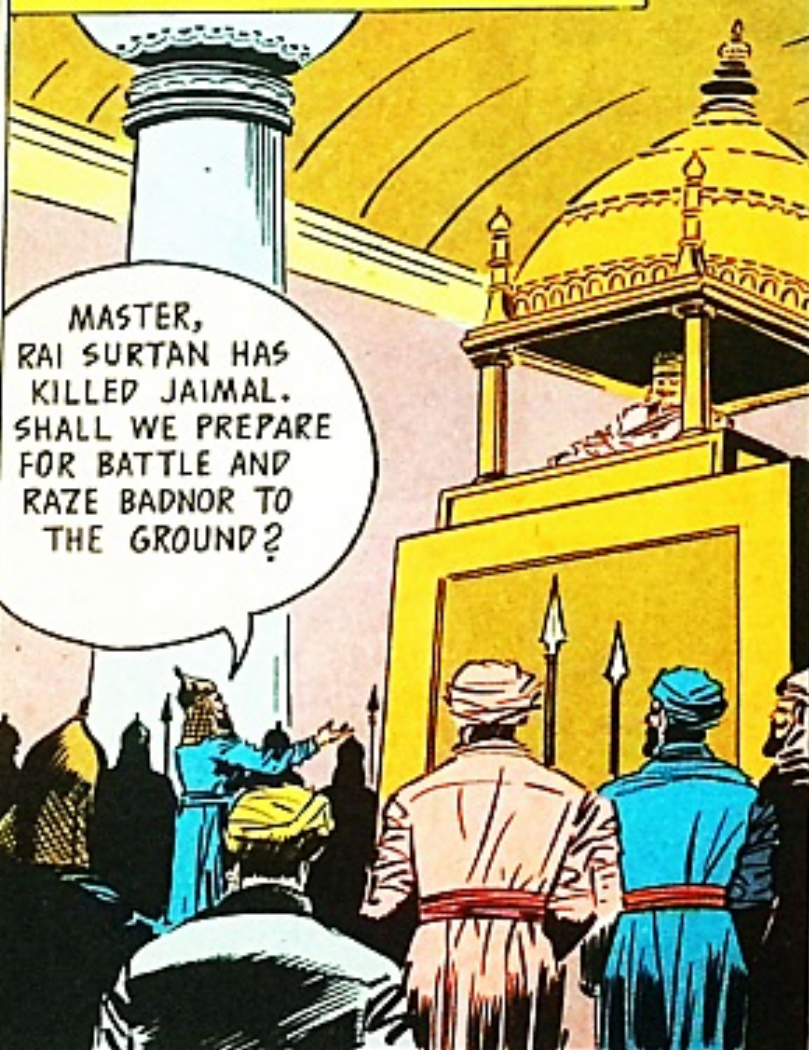
HE MADE NO ATTEMPT TO RALLY HIS TROOPS. INSTEAD—
THODA CAN WAIT. I WILL LINGER ON AT RAI SURTAN'S. I'LL MAKE TARABAI MINE BEFORE I REDEEM THODA.

UNFORTUNATELY HIS INTENTIONS WERE NOT HONOURABLE. ONE DAY—
NO, SIR, YOU MUST NOT PROCEED FURTHER. THOSE ARE MY MISTRESS'S APARTMENTS.
LET ME GO, I SAY.

HELP! HELP!

RAI SURTAN, HEARING THE MAID SCREAM, RUSHED TO THE SPOT.
WH-WHAT'S THE MATTER? WHY DID YOU SCREAM?
MASTER...THE DOOR... MY MISTRESS... JAIMAL.

RAI SURTAN WAS BLIND WITH RAGE.
SHAME! AND YOU, THE SON OF RANA RAIMAL!

HE'S DEAD!

THE NEWS OF JAIMAL'S DEATH SOON REACHED THE EARS OF THE RANA.
MASTER, RAI SURTAN HAS KILLED JAIMAL. SHALL WE PREPARE FOR BATTLE AND RAZE BADNOR TO THE GROUND?

BUT THE RANA WAS A NOBLE MAN.
NO! JAIMAL DARED TO INSULT HIS HOST; ENDANGER THE HONOUR OF HIS DAUGHTER. THAT TOO, WHEN RAI SURTAN IS ALREADY IN DISTRESS. HE DESERVED TO DIE!

PRITHVIRAJ, THE RANA'S SECOND SON, TURNED TO THE RANA.
LET ME HELP THE DISTRESSED FATHER AND WIN THE FAIR TARABAI.

THE RANA WAS OVERJOYED.
GO, MY SON! PROVE THAT NOT ALL THE SONS OF MEWAR ARE DISHONOURABLE.

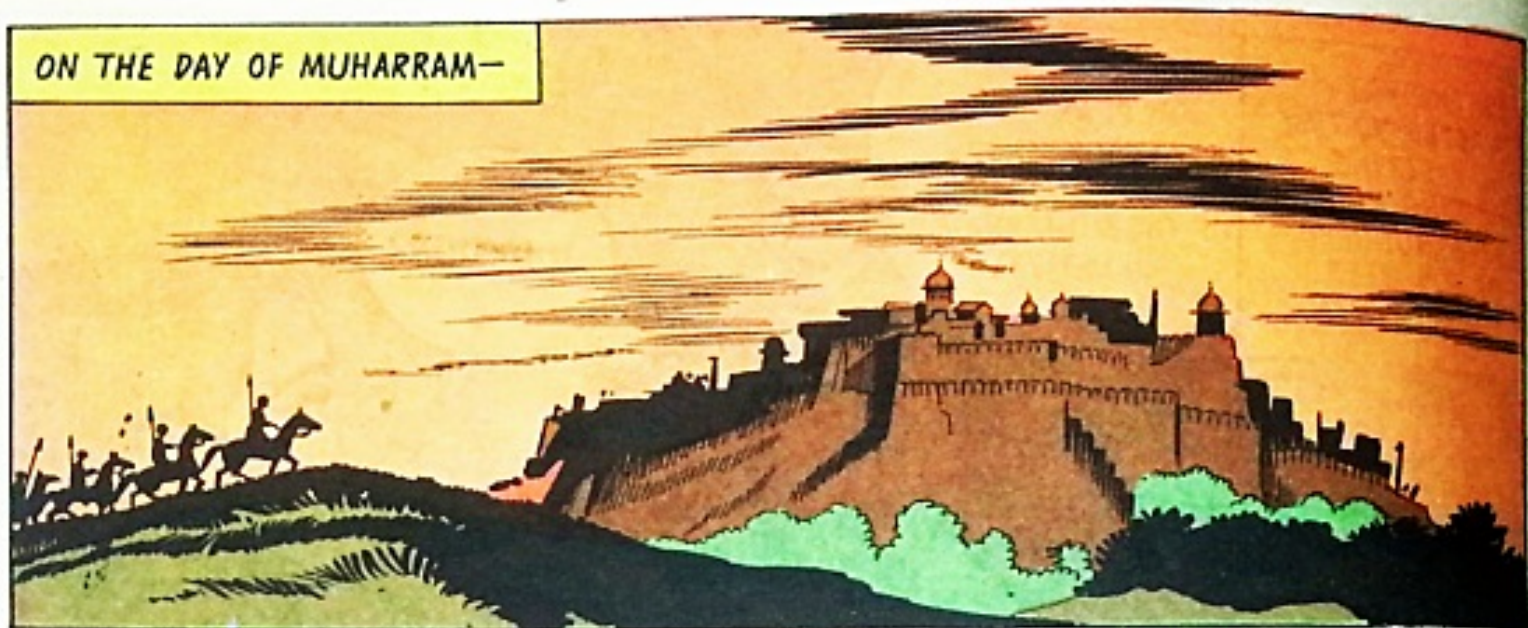
AT BADNOR, TARABAI LAID THE SAME CONDITION BEFORE PRITHVIRAJ.
REDEEM THODA AND I AM YOURS.
I WILL RESTORE THODA TO YOUR FATHER OR I AM NO TRUE RAJPUT.

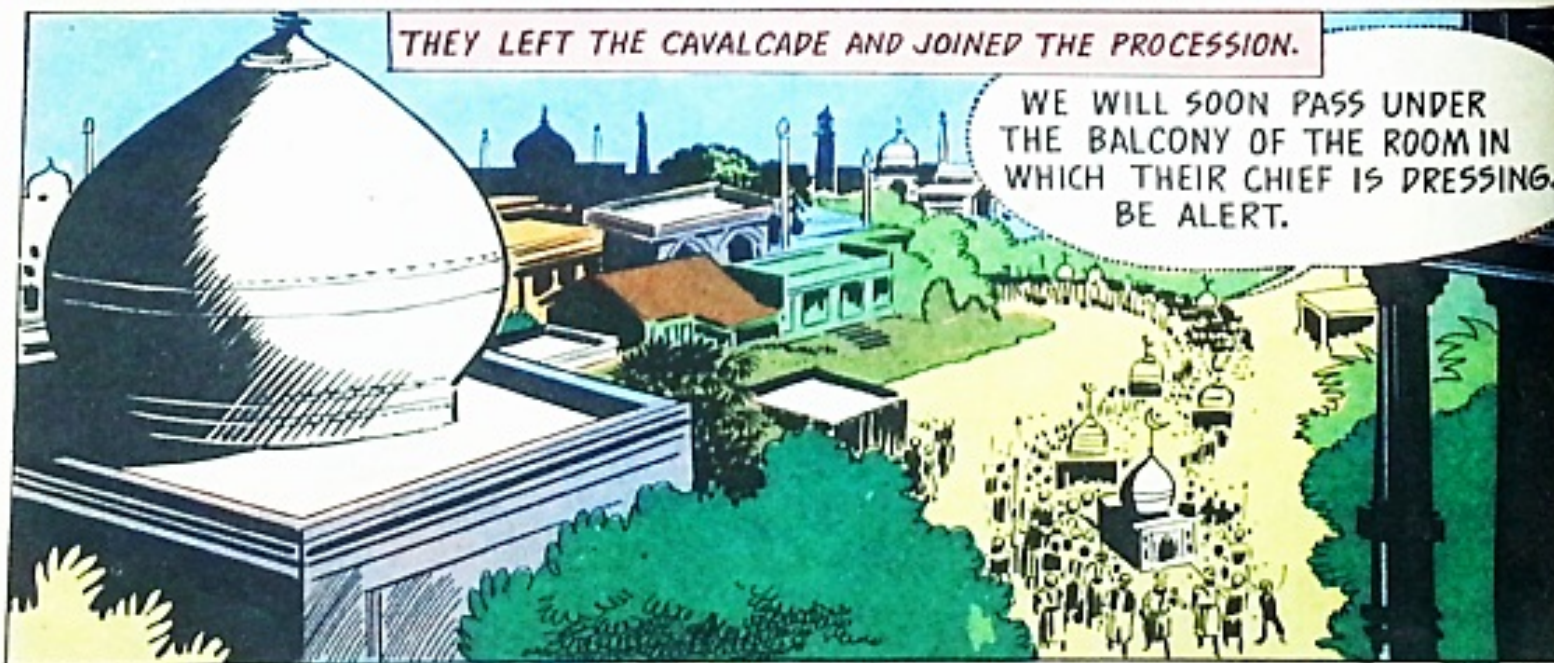
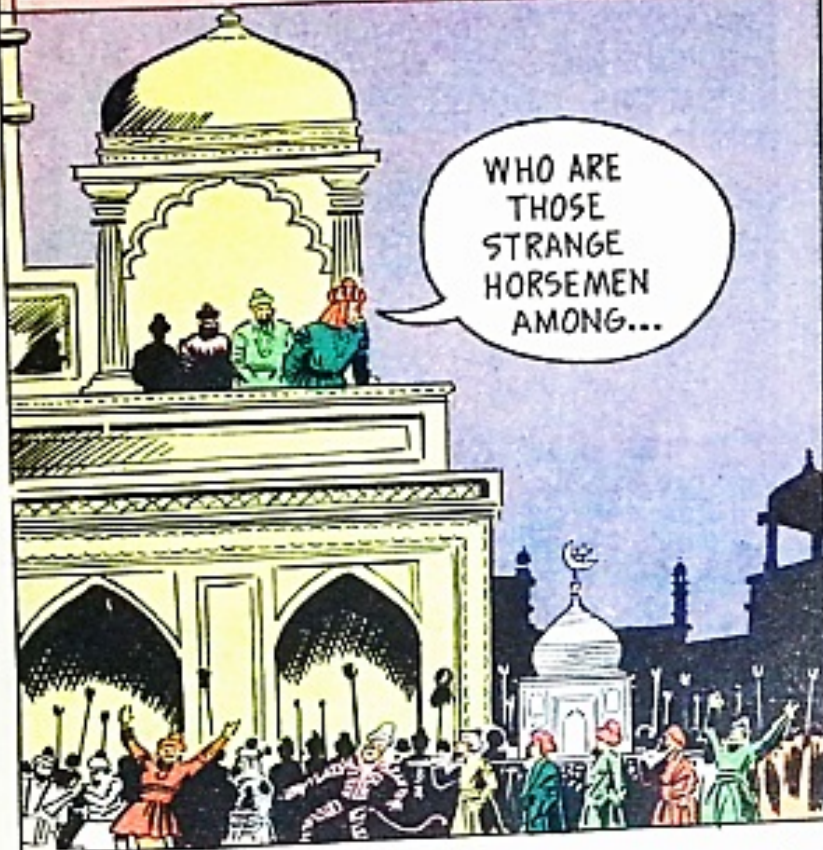
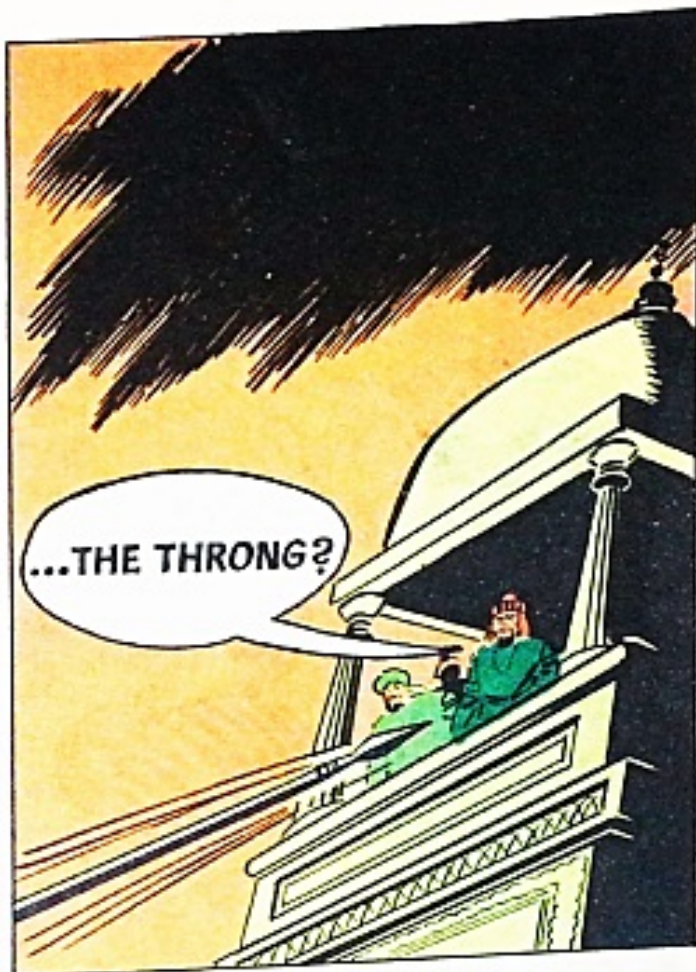
I WISH WITH ALL MY HEART THAT YOU DO. I WOULD RATHER BE YOUR BRIDE THAN ANYONE ELSE'S.

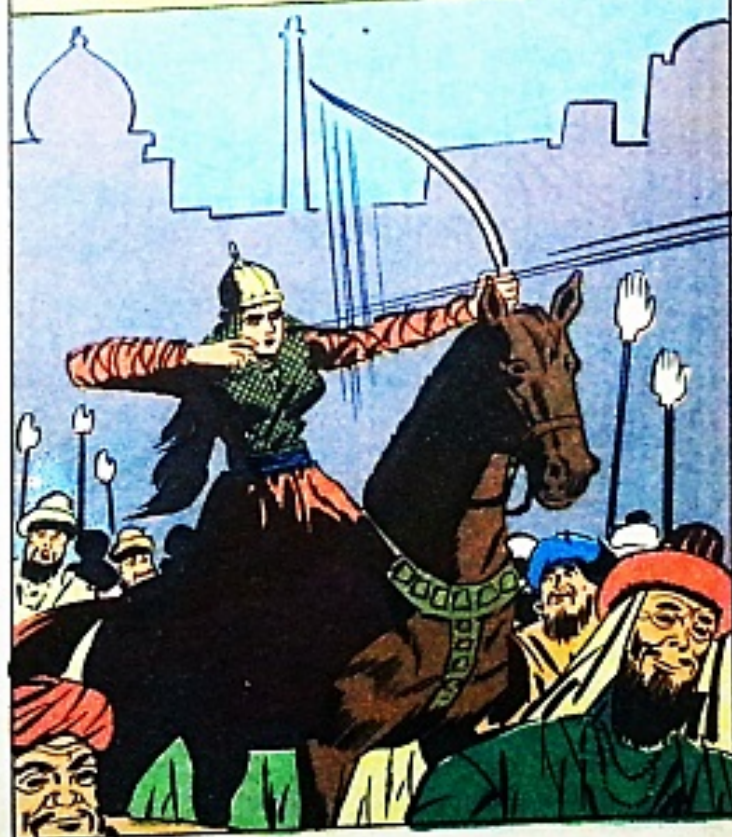
PRITHVIRAJ WASTED NO TIME IN RALLYING AROUND HIM FIVE HUNDRED OF HIS BEST CAVALRY-MEN.
I PLAN TO ATTACK THODA AT THE TIME OF THE MUHARRAM FESTIVAL.
WHY THEN?

THE AFGHANS WILL BE ENGROSSED IN THE FESTIVITIES. THEY WILL BE OFF THEIR GUARD.

I'LL COME WITH YOU.
COME IF YOU MUST, FAIR PRINCESS. THOUGH I'D RATHER YOUR PRECIOUS LIFE WERE NOT ENDANGERED.

ON THE DAY OF MUHARRAM—

TARABAI, YOU, AND ONE CAVALRY-MAN RIDE WITH ME.

THEY LEFT THE CAVALCADE AND JOINED THE PROCESSION.
WE WILL SOON PASS UNDER THE BALCONY OF THE ROOM IN WHICH THEIR CHIEF IS DRESSING. BE ALERT.

AS THE PROCESSION PROCEEDED, THE CHIEF CAME OUT ON THE BALCONY.
WHO ARE THOSE STRANGE HORSEMEN AMONG...

...THE THRONG?

PRITHVIRAJ'S LANCE STRUCK HIM DOWN.
E-E-AH!

BEFORE HE COULD RAISE HIMSELF, AN ARROW FROM TARABAI'S BOW...

...SENT HIM STAGGERING TO HIS DEATH.

WHILE THE PANIC-STRICKEN CROWDS WERE YET RECOVERING FROM THE SHOCK...

...THE THREE TURNED TO JOIN THEIR TROOPS.
CATCH THEM!
THE INFIDELS!
THEY ARE THE MURDERERS!

BUT TARABAI SENT THE ELEPHANT LUMBERING AWAY.

AS SOON AS THEY WERE IN THE MIDST OF THEIR TROOPS—
ATTACK!

THE AFGHANS FLED.
CUT THE INVADING CURS TO BITS!
DON'T LET THEM ESCAPE!

WHEN THE AFGHANS WERE COMPLETELY ROUTED A MESSAGE WAS SENT TO RAI SURTAN.
THODA IS FREE AND AWAITS THE RETURN OF ITS PRINCE —PRITHVIRAJ AND TARABAI.

GET READY TO RIDE TO THODA.

OUTSIDE THODA, TARABAI AND PRITHVIRAJ WERE WAITING TO RECEIVE HIM.
MY DAUGHTER! MY SON! THIS IS THE HAPPIEST DAY IN MY LIFE.

TARABAI AND PRITHVIRAJ LED HIM INTO A JUBILANT CITY.
OUR BELOVED PRINCE AND HIS DAUGHTER ARE WITH US AGAIN.
IT IS A HAPPY DAY FOR THODA!

AS SOON AS RAI SURTAN HAD SETTLED IN THODA—
MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE WEDDING OF TARABAI AND PRITHVIRAJ. LET THERE BE NO DELAY.

AT THE WEDDING—
THE VALIANT PRITHVIRAJ HAS CERTAINLY EARNED HIS BRIDE.
YES! OUR PRINCESS DID WELL TO CHOOSE HIM. HE HAS PROVED BEYOND DOUBT THAT HE CAN TAKE CARE OF HER AND HER PEOPLE.

AFTER THE WEDDING—
DON'T GO AWAY TO MEWAR JUST YET. I WOULD BE HAPPY IF YOU COULD HELP ME ARRANGE THE AFFAIRS OF MY KINGDOM.
WE WILL STAY, FATHER.

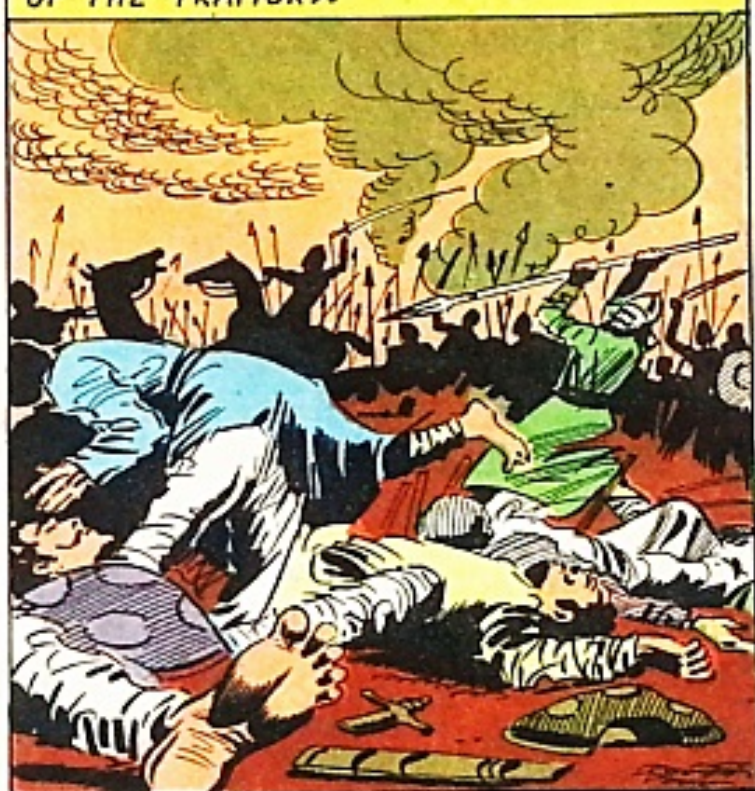
SO THEY STAYED ON AT THODA, HAPPY IN EACH OTHER'S COMPANY. -TO THE GREAT SATISFACTION OF RAI SURTAN.

BUT AFTER A FEW MONTHS—
I AM RESTLESS, DEAR HUSBAND. I LONG FOR FRESH SIGHTS AND NEW ADVENTURES.
LET US GO TO MEWAR.

MEANWHILE AT MEWAR—
IF YOU HELP ME OVERTHROW THE RANA, I SHALL GIVE YOU A PORTION OF MEWAR AS YOUR REWARD.
YOUR OFFER IS WORTH MY FULL SUPPORT.

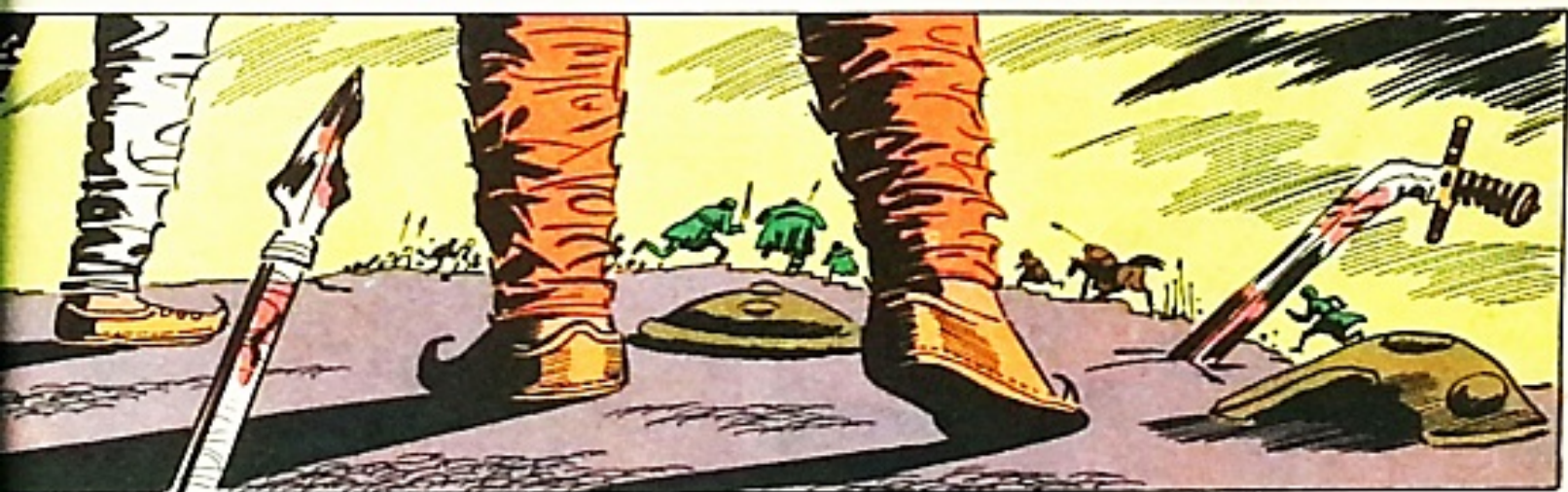
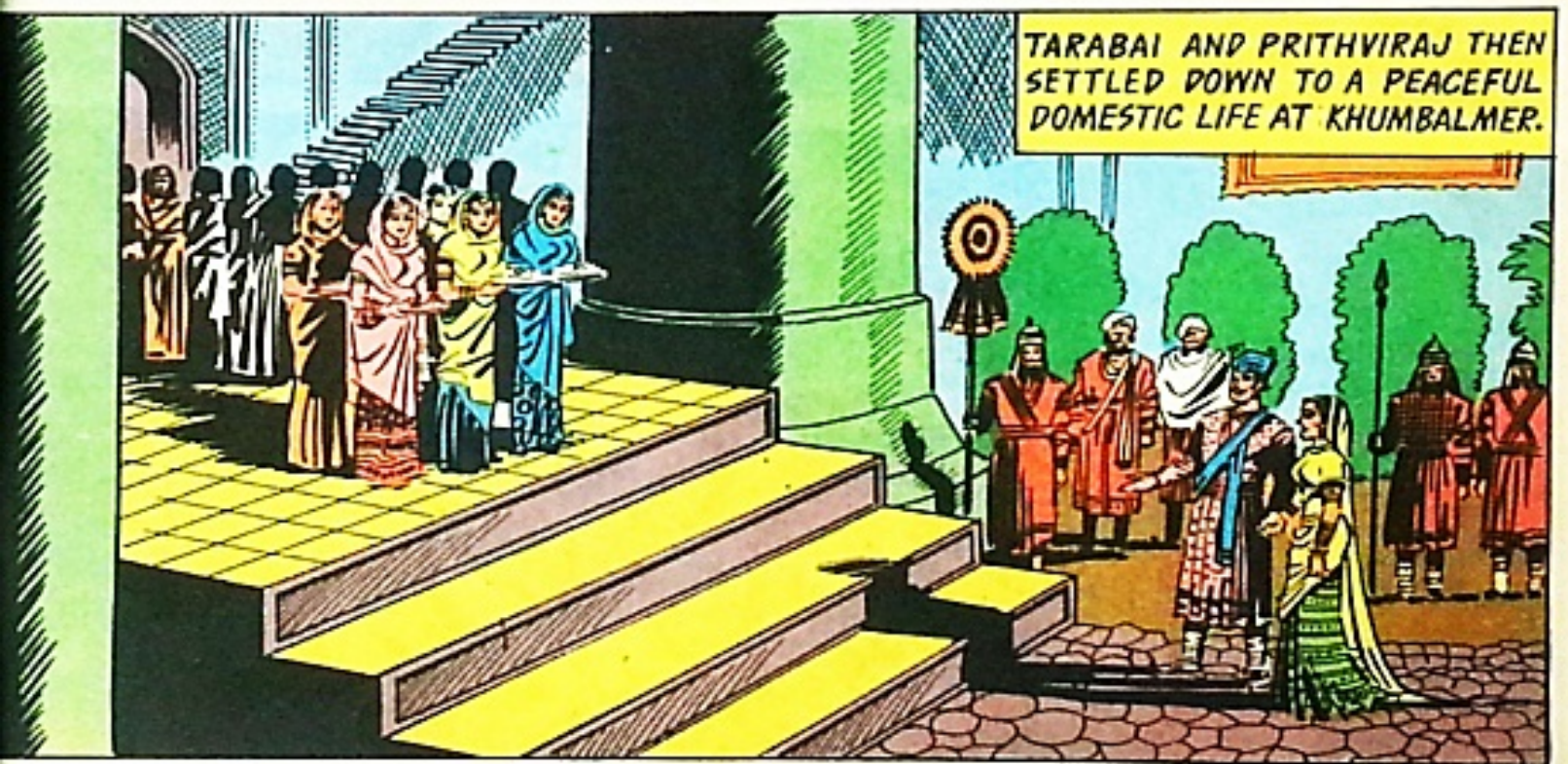
THE TRAITORS ROSE AGAINST RANA RAIMAL, PRITHVIRAJ'S FATHER.

THE RANA, TAKEN BY SURPRISE, MUSTERED WHAT TROOPS HE COULD AND GAVE BATTLE.

BUT THE RANA'S TROOPS WERE A MERE HANDFUL COMPARED TO THE HORDES OF THE TRAITORS.

THE RANA WAS ABOUT TO RETREAT WHEN–

IT'S PRITHVIRAJ AND HIS WARRIOR BRIDE, TARABAI.
WE ARE SAVED.
THEY HAVE OVER A THOUSAND FRESH CAVALRY!

TARABAI WAS IN HER ELEMENT AND ACCOMPLISHED WONDERS ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT IT WAS THE ARM OF A WOMAN THAT SENT ME REELING!

TARABAI AND PRITHVIRAJ THEN SETTLED DOWN TO A PEACEFUL DOMESTIC LIFE AT KHUMBALMER.

ONE DAY—
A LETTER FROM MY SISTER. THE ONE WHO MARRIED THE SIROHI PRINCE, PABHOO RAO.
WHAT DOES IT SAY?

SHE COMPLAINS OF ILLTREATMENT, AT THE HANDS OF THE PRINCE— AN OPIUM ADDICT. SHE BEGS TO BE TAKEN BACK HOME.

TARABAI WAS ENRAGED AND HORRIFIED.
LET US GO IMMEDIATELY TO SIROHI, PUNISH THE PRINCE AND BRING HER BACK.
PUNISH THE PRINCE AND BRING HER BACK WE MUST. BUT...

...ON THIS EXPEDITION I'D RATHER GO ALONE.
I DO NOT LIKE TO SEND YOU ALONE. LET ME ACCOMPANY YOU.

BUT PRITHVIRAJ WAS ADAMANT AND SET OUT ALL ALONE.

HE REACHED SIROHI AT MIDNIGHT.
I SHALL SCALE THE PALACE WALLS.

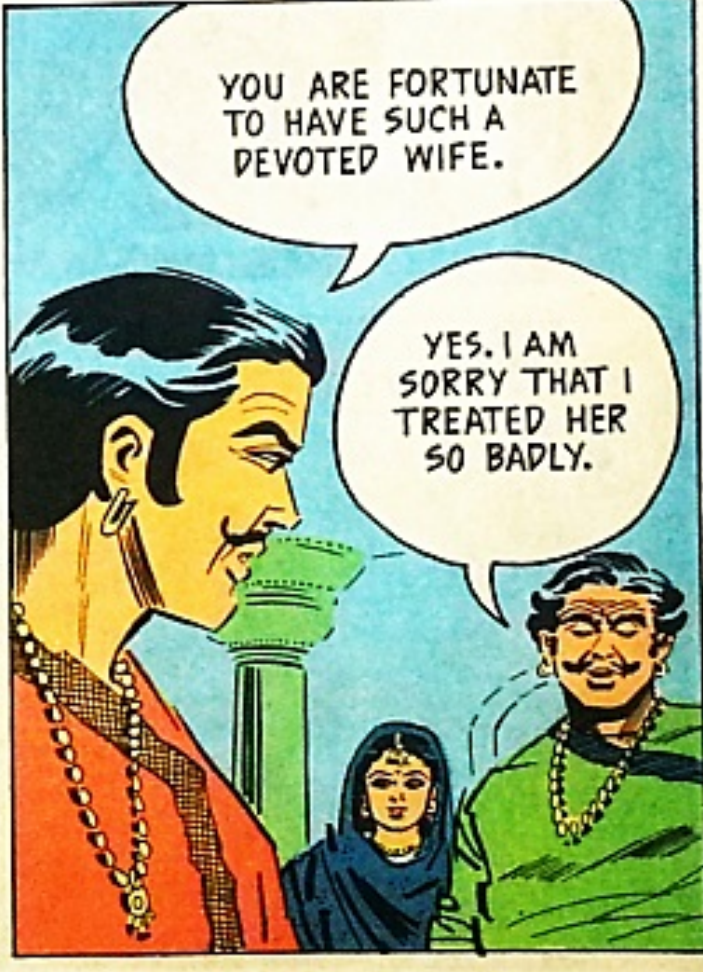
OH! SISTER! SISTER! IS THIS YOUR PLIGHT? EVEN SERVANTS ARE BETTER OFF.

THE SIGHT ENRAGED PRITHVIRAJ BEYOND CONTROL.
YOU SHALL DIE PABHOO RAO, YOU SCOUNDREL!
UH? WHO ARE YOU...?

OH! IT'S YOU, PRITHVIRAJ. FORGIVE ME. PLEASE SPARE MY LIFE.
YES, FORGIVE HIM DEAR BROTHER. FOR MY SAKE SPARE HIS LIFE.

PRITHVIRAJ LOVED HIS SISTER TOO MUCH TO IGNORE HER REQUEST.
ALL RIGHT, I WILL. BUT NOT BEFORE HE IS PROPERLY PUNISHED.

GET UP, YOU COWARD.

NOW PICK UP YOUR WIFE'S SLIPPERS...

...AND PLACE THEM ON YOUR HEAD.

GOOD! NOW TOUCH HER FEET.

YOU WILL PAY FOR THIS WITH YOUR LIFE, PRITHVIRAJ.

YOU ARE FORTUNATE TO HAVE SUCH A DEVOTED WIFE.
YES. I AM SORRY THAT I TREATED HER SO BADLY.

BUT PABHOO RAO'S REPENTANCE WAS NOT GENUINE. HE SEETHED INWARDLY.
PRITHVIRAJ IS FOND OF SWEETS. A FEW POISONED SWEETS WILL DO THE TRICK.

A FEW DAYS LATER PRITHVIRAJ TOOK LEAVE OF HIS SISTER AND HER HUSBAND.
TARABAI WILL BE ANXIOUSLY WAITING FOR ME. IT'S TIME I RETURNED HOME.

PABHOO PRODUCED A SMALL PACKET.
HERE ARE SOME SWEETS FOR YOU TO EAT ON THE WAY.

PRITHVIRAJ WAS OVERWHELMED BY PABHOO'S GENEROSITY.

I MUST THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY, PABHOO. TARABAI WILL BE PLEASED TO LEARN OF THE OUTCOME OF MY VISIT. MAY YOU AND MY SISTER LIVE HAPPILY HENCEFORTH.

AND PRITHVIRAJ RODE OFF.

HOW WE MISJUDGED PABHOO. HE IS A GOOD MAN AND HAS TRULY REPENTED OF HIS PAST BEHAVIOUR.

AS HE NEARED KHUMBALMER, HE SUDDENLY FELT HUNGRY.
I'LL EAT A FEW OF THE SWEETS AND TAKE THE REST TO TARABAI.

AND THE UNSUSPECTING PRITHVIRAJ ATE A FEW PIECES.

AS HE REACHED THE SHRINE OUTSIDE THE PALACE—
I FEEL ODD. MY EYELIDS REFUSE TO REMAIN OPEN.

I CAN HARDLY SIT STRAIGHT ON MY HORSE.

THEN PRITHVIRAJ UNDERSTOOD.
I HAVE BEEN POISONED. THE TREACHEROUS PABHOO. TARABAI! TARABAI! I MUST REACH TARABAI.

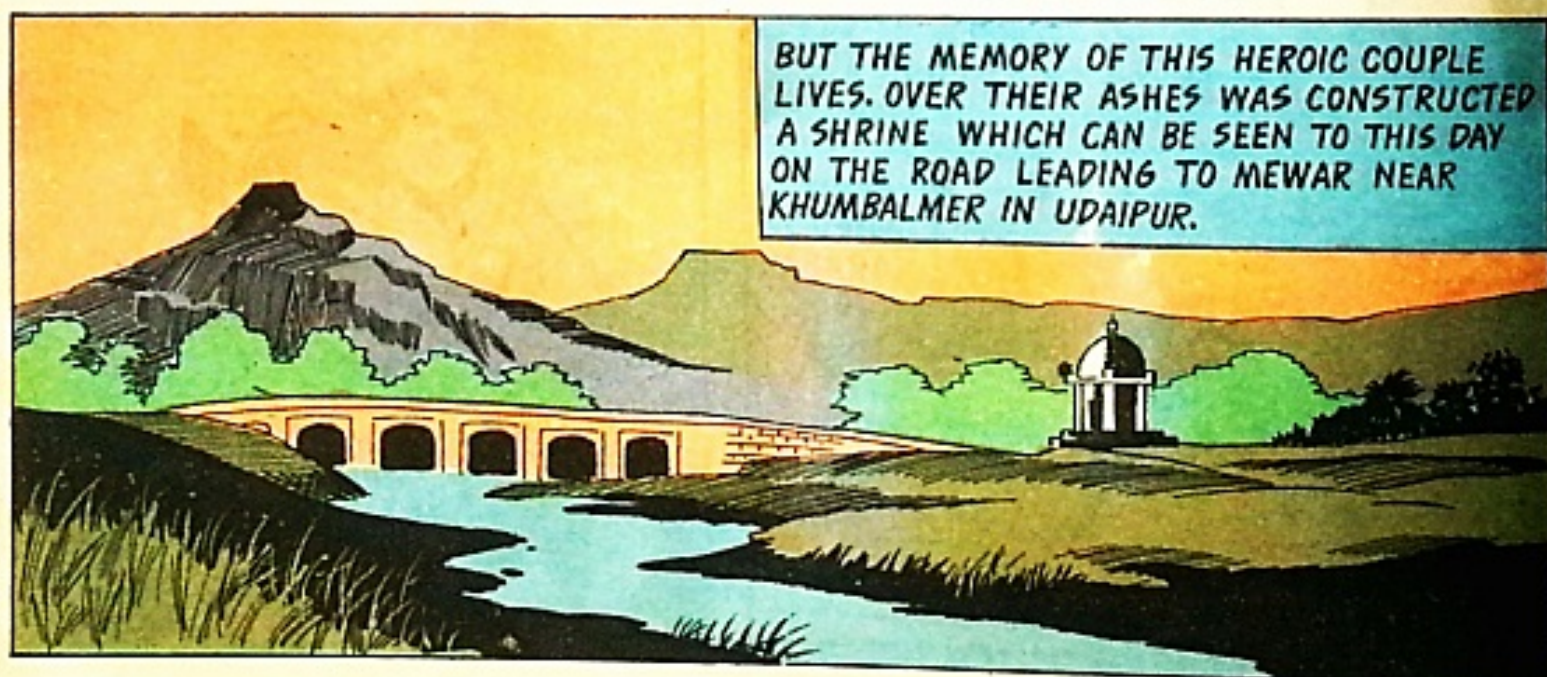
BEFORE HE COULD DRAG HIMSELF ANY FURTHER, HE WAS DEAD!

A FEW PASSERS-BY RAN UP TO HIM.
IT IS OUR PRINCE!
HE HAS BEEN POISONED!
SEND WORD TO TARABAI.

AS SOON AS TARABAI HEARD THE NEWS, SHE RAN OUT TO WHERE HER HUSBAND LAY.

HER LOVE FOR THE MAN WHO HAD WON HER HOMELAND BACK FOR HER, GUSHED FORTH AND ALMOST BROKE HER HEART.
MY HUSBAND! OH MY DEAR HUSBAND!

AS WAS THE CUSTOM IN THOSE DAYS, TARABAI JOINED HER HUSBAND ON THE FUNERAL PYRE.

BUT THE MEMORY OF THIS HEROIC COUPLE LIVES. OVER THEIR ASHES WAS CONSTRUCTED A SHRINE WHICH CAN BE SEEN TO THIS DAY ON THE ROAD LEADING TO MEWAR NEAR KHUMBALMER IN UDAIPUR.

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